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Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 8 May 2015 from the Minister Counsellor for Host Country Affairs of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Chair of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

I have the honour to enclose a copy of a note verbale dated 8 May 2015 that has been sent by the United States Mission to the United Nations to the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations as a response to the latter's note verbale of 30 September 2014 (A/AC.154/406, dated 3 October 2014) (see annex).

I request that you circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(*Signed*) James B. **Donovan**
Minister Counsellor for Host Country Affairs

15-08431 (E) 030615

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Annex to the letter dated 8 May 2015 from the Minister Counsellor for Host Country Affairs of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Chair of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

The United States Mission to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the latter's note verbale of 30 September 2014, in which the Permanent Mission reported the blockage of an international funds transfer made by the Republic of Cuba on 11 September 2013 to a United Nations account for the purpose of fulfilling the financial obligations of the Republic of Cuba to the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The United States Mission immediately began working on the information that it received in the note verbale informing it of the blockage of funds that had occurred the previous year. Initial attempts to trace the transaction using the date provided were unsuccessful and the United States Mission requested further details from the Permanent Mission. The name of the bank used by the Republic of Cuba in Canada was provided and, later, a timeline with further details was given to host country representatives by a delegate of the Permanent Mission in mid-December 2014.

As banking privacy laws prevented JPMorgan Chase & Co. from sharing any substantive details regarding the transaction with the United States Mission, host country representatives sought to coordinate with the United Nations and to clarify the actual date on which the funds were blocked so that the transaction could be identified by the United States Department of the Treasury. Once the transaction information was located, the United States Department of State in Washington, D.C., requested a licence on behalf of the Government of Cuba that would allow the funds to be released by JPMorgan Chase & Co. The licence was issued early in February 2015 and was transmitted to JPMorgan Chase & Co., which then followed its own internal procedures to process the transaction.

The United States Mission continued to make inquiries and to actively seek updates on the matter. With assistance from the United Nations, the United States Mission received confirmation that the funds were returned by JPMorgan Chase & Co. to the Canadian bank account of the Republic of Cuba on 21 April 2015. The United Nations was also able to clarify that it did have an account in Canada to which the Permanent Mission of Cuba could transfer the funds in order to avoid obstacles that might exist in transferring funds to its account based in the United States.